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FOREIGN DEPARTMENT



IN CHARGE OF

LAVINIA L. DOCK, R.N.

OLD AND NEW WAYS IN SPAIN

THE German Nurses' Journal, of October 1, has a most animated and graphic letter from one of the German Nurses' Association, Sister Marie Zomak, who is in charge of the new hospital and training school in Madrid, called after Dr. Rubio, who founded it, The Institute Rubio.

Sister Marie had in her youth lived many years in Madrid, therefore knowing the language and the people. On her way thither from Germany to take charge, she stayed with Miss Elston and Dr. Hamilton in Bordeaux, and writes with enthusiasm of this splendid work, and of Mme. Kriegk's ever-helpful share in it as lay partner. She absorbed many useful suggestions from them all, and proceeded to Madrid. She describes the Institute Rubio as a mass of fine modern buildings, beautifully situated upon a height outside of the city, two sides giving beautiful views of wooded hills and lofty mountains capped until late summer with snow, while from the other two sides they look down upon the city. They are set in gardens full of flowers, vegetables, and fruit, while roses of all kinds run riot, from common hedge and climbing roses to the most sumptuous varieties. Their domain also includes a tract of fine woodland. The wards and dispensary buildings are built according to the latest requirements of modern science, dustless, spotless, and shining in enamel, glass, nickel, and marble. The dispensaries cover every possible specialty and there are X-ray and Finsen-light departments, as well as the newest, complete outfits of everything electrical and orthopædic. There is also an extensive chemical laboratory and one for the study of cancer.

Dr. Rubio is described as a genius, who has brought about a revolution in Spanish surgery, and was the first to perform a laryngectomy, ovariectomy, and enterostomy in Spain. He had explained at a banquet the need of a modern institution of this kind, and the money to build it was subscribed then and there.

In its inner organization, says Sister Marie, it is perhaps unique, the only example of its kind anywhere, as it is a complete, small republic.

About 150 physicians, all fully diplomæd—no medical students,—are connected with it, all giving their services without any remuneration. Each one pays \$50 to the Institute as a sort of membership fee and is then free to exercise his professional philanthropy to its uttermost.

There are two wards of 24 beds each, one for men and one for women. All the beds are free, and the most poor and needy sick persons are taken. The whole is, of course, an immense experimental laboratory, but the patients are treated like welcome guests and their families and relatives likewise.

The description of the nurses' establishment is very entertaining. It was the first secular school in Spain, having been begun in 1896. However, at first, it was ordered on lines closely following the example of the convent. The nurses' heads were shaved and a hideous purple cap with yellow strings set upon them; summer and winter they were stockingless with sandals only on their feet, and their hours on duty were from five in the morning straight through the whole day, the whole night, and the whole of the next day until about nine o'clock in the evening, or, in all, about forty to forty-one hours of continuous duty. This duty came in rotation every fifth or fourth,—sometimes even every third day, according to circumstances. Such was the system followed by the Sisters of Mercy, who had been in charge of the Institute up to the time the lay nurses were introduced, and it had been continued until Sister Marie took charge and established a more rational order. How the nurses ever survived it, she writes, is a mystery, for the wards were always full of new operation cases, requiring constant attention. Worse than this even, before her day, it had been the custom to punish the nurses, whenever enforcement of discipline was necessary, by compelling them to remain for *several* nights on night duty without giving them any rest by day, or else to go to bed without their meals! Are not these cruelties the most grotesque in the world? So utterly stupid and idiotic! (These, be it noted, are our reflections.) Sister Marie has put an end to these abominations. The night nurses now sleep eight hours a day; a cook, a laundress, and two scrubbers have relieved the nurses of these domestic chores; the hideous purple hoods have been thrown away and little white caps crown the dark hair which has been encouraged to grow, and woollen stockings cover the cold bare legs. The nurses remain for three years, full maintenance and a small money premium at the end of their training being given them. Sister Marie governs them by kindness and disciplines them by praising all good work. She finds them responsive to this treatment, but that nothing succeeds under harshness or severity. The pupils are gay, cheerful,

childishly pleased with simple diversions: they delight in telling fairy stories, which always end in the arrival of a Prince Charming. They have to be constantly chaperoned, and may never go out alone, but they are used to this. As there is no compulsory education in Spain, some of them have to be drilled in reading, writing, and arithmetic in the school. Sister Marie is thoroughly happy in her work: she is mistress of the house,—the doctors attend to their own work and leave her to attend to hers.

ITEMS

THE French Nurses' Journal takes the palm for its well-arranged memorial number to Miss Nightingale. Beginning with some French verses, by Commandant Pilate, called "Scutari," it sets Miss Nightingale's principles in a few headlines and then gives an excellent outline of her life and public honors, following this with several pages of selected quotations from "Notes on Nursing." The celebration of a half-century of nursing at Carnegie Hall and Teachers' College, New York, under Miss Nutting's direction, is then described, anecdotes follow, and Longfellow's poem in full. Soyer's description of her personal appearance is then given, and a description of her burial. A bibliography of her writings is given, and then a description of the French, Italian, and Spanish schools founded upon the Nightingale system completes what will always be a remarkable epitome of Miss Nightingale's life and works. Two illustrations are given. We congratulate the able editors of *La Garde. Malade Hospitalière*, upon their good editorialship, if we may coin a word.

The following resolution has been passed by the English matrons:

The Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland is of the opinion that the Nurses' Memorial to Florence Nightingale should take the form of a statue, to be erected in some suitable position, as a permanent memorial and a lasting sign to future ages of the admiration and appreciation of the Twentieth Century nurses for the great Foundress of their Profession. The Matrons' Council deprecates the idea of placing in the forefront of the Nurses' Memorial a scheme, however praiseworthy, for the personal benefit of nurses themselves.